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ABSTRACT

This is one of a series which focuses on innovations in the training and supervision of counselors. It discusses simulation gaming by providing: (1) a definition of the procedure; (2) a description of models of practice; (3) a discussion of the effects of using simulation gaming; (4) suggestions for possible applications of the procedure; and (5) questions to consider when designing or using simulation gaming experiences. A bibliography is included. (Author)

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PERSONNEL SERVICES
REVIEW

SERIES 1

Innovations in the Training And Supervision of Counselors

SIMULATION GAMING

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PERSONNEL SERVICES REVIEW

Series 1
"Innovations in the Training and Supervision of Counselors"

Simulation Gaming

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FORWARD

The Personnel Services Review is an ongoing publication Series which has been developed by CAPS to inform personnel workers about new developments in a number of personnel services areas. There will be several different series of the Personnel Services Review. Each series will focus on a broad area of personnel work practice. Within each series there will be a number of specific issues (varying from five to ten depending on the series). Each of these issues will concentrate on a specific practice, procedure or method. The goal of these publications is to enable the reader to: (1) become aware of a practice, procedure or method; (2) learn about the ways in which this practice has been applied by others; (3) understand the underlying theory behind the practice; (4) consider possible applications of the practice in a variety of settings; and (5) consider ways that the practice might be implemented in his own personnel work program.

This particular Personnel Services Review Series is entitled, "Innovations in the Supervision and Training of Counselors." The series will contain about ten issues. Each issue will focus on an innovation which has direct relevance for the training and supervision of counselors. The application of these innovations to both the pre-service and in-service training and supervision of counselors will be considered. The series is intended to be used by counselor educators, state department personnel and guidance and/or pupil personnel administrators in the development of programs to assist counselor trainees and practicing counselors learn and improve counseling skills.

SIMULATION GAMING

RELEVANCE TO YOU

What techniques can be used by school counselors to help inexperienced youth obtain problem solving experiences relating to vocational and/or educational goals?

What techniques can be used by counselor educators to help counselor trainees develop counseling skills and to help them understand and experience the intricacies of a functioning guidance program?

A new technique which lends itself to both these situations is called simulation or simulation gaming. While this technique has been utilized in other areas (business and military) for many years its use in education is fairly new and as such it may be considered an educational innovation.

WHAT IS SIMULATION GAMING?

Simulation gaming, when used as a teaching device, is the process of providing experiences which parallel real life situations and involve the participant in such activities as: (1) seeking and obtaining information; (2) decision-making; and (3) acting on feedback received as a result of a specific decision strategy. Simulation gaming, therefore, enables the individual to test out a real situation; to investigate the extent to which the real situation is satisfying for him, i.e., a specific occupation; to learn which skills and learnings may be required in the situation; to apply specific skills and learnings to a situation; and to see the effects specific skills, strategies and decisions have on a given situation.

MODELS OF PRACTICE

The following are examples of the type of simulation and simulation gaming experiences currently being used.

Career Kits

John Krumboltz at Stanford University has developed a series of problem-solving materials designed to provide youth with opportunities to experience, evaluate and reach a decision concerning problems faced by members of specific occupations. The materials were developed to: (1) be realistic and indicative of the problems faced by members of the occupation; (2) be of an appropriate reading level for most high school students; (3) be intrinsically interesting to most students; (4) be short enough so most students could handle the given problem within an hour's time; and (5) be self-contained and self-administered.

The Accountant's Kit is an example of one of the 20 different occupations available from Science Research Associates. The kit begins with a brief explanation of the services provided by accountants. Some information on check writing, endorsements and check clearing is provided. The

problem presented is to go over the records of a small sport shop at the owner's request. Cancelled checks and a bookkeeper's report are provided. The student makes a detailed comparison of the checks and records and reports back to the owner by picking one of three letters provided. All materials have been constructed to parallel as close as possible documents actually used in business. The kit itself was checked for accuracy and representativeness by certified public accountants. (Krumboltz, 1969)

Life Career Game

The Life Career Game developed at Johns Hopkins University has been used extensively in the Palo Alto Unified School District. This game is intended to help students in the decision-making process by providing the following conditions: (1) involvement, (2) relevant facts, (3) clarification of values, and (4) practice in making decisions.

Students play the game as the decision maker for a fictional individual. Materials include: (1) a profile of the fictional student; (2) a transcript on which to record the grade earned; (3) a list of course offerings; (4) a planning sheet for use in deciding how the student will spend his time; and (5) a summary sheet for recording scores. Players fill in the planning sheet by assigning time devoted to education, job, family life, and leisure. Scores for the round are given on the basis of these hours. Opportunities for jobs, marriage and children, and post high school education exist and can be applied for. After each round the teams pick an unplanned event card whose effect they must consider in future planning. Teams play for a span of 8 to 10 years. However, at spaced intervals playing stops for group critiques and discussion. At this time teams may be asked to describe their strategy for play. (Varenhorst, 1969).

The Counselor's Week

This model may more appropriately be referred to as a simulation than as a simulation game. It is designed to introduce counselor trainees to the realities of school counseling and to help them tie together the theoretical formations they have learned into a workable model for use in an actual school setting. Students receive the following: (1) "course study type" of information on students, including transcripts and test data; (2) a class schedule; (3) "editorial pages" from the community newspaper; (4) data on graduation requirements, course descriptions and prerequisites; and (5) college admissions and scholarship information. Workbooks present tasks which require responses from the student based on his background and understanding and the simulated environment.

Examples of the tasks include: (1) dealing with teachers who refer discipline cases to the counselor; (2) working with an underachiever who hopes to attend a prestige college; (3) filling out recommendation forms; (4) responding to letters from various sources requesting confidential information about students; and (5) working out class schedules. Workbooks are presented over a span of several weeks and discussion sessions follow the completion of each. (Dunlop, 1968)

Instruction Simulation

Although this model is not used in any game format it warrants being included as it is concerned with a very specific area of counselor education; how to aid counselor trainees to develop appropriate counselor response leads. Furthermore, this approach appears to be gaining more and more usage in counselor education programs. This procedure provides practice opportunities for trainees--a means to learn specific behaviors without the risk of harming real clients. The instruction-simulation technique: (1) tells the trainee what behaviors the supervisor wants him to learn; (2) defines and interprets these behaviors; (3) provides the trainee the opportunity to practice the specified behaviors. The program as described by Delaney (1969) would consist of: (1) 30 two-minute client response leads; (2) 60 one-minute responses to provide reinforcement to the counselor; and (3) 60 one-minute responses to provide no reinforcement to the counselor. The procedure is envisioned as follows: (1) audio-visual stimulus presented on video monitor; (2) S responds; (3) supervisor provides a cue regarding the client response; (4) audio-visual stimulus is presented again; (5) S responds; (6) if the supervisors feel that the response was appropriate, S receives a positively reinforcing stimulus and a verbal reinforcement from the supervisor (the next main stimulus is then presented); and (7) if the supervisor feels that the response was inappropriate, S received a non-reinforcing stimulus and procedure one through seven are repeated until the trainee receives a positive reinforcement.

GENERALIZATIONS

1. Simulation gaming can be used in three different ways: (1) it can be used as a means of generating information and as such it becomes a research tool;

(2) it can be used to develop new models of operation or to evaluate models already in use; and (3) it can be used for instructional purposes as a means for individuals to develop skills and acquire information. (Twelker, 1968)

2. Coleman (1968) lists the following essential properties of a simulation:
   a. Its basic elements are players or actors, each striving to achieve his goal.
   b. It is limited to a small, fixed set of players.
   c. Its rules limit the range and define the nature of legitimate actions of the players.
   d. Again, through the rules, it establishes the basic order, sequence, and structure within which the actions take place.
   e. It is delimited in time as well as scope with an end defined by the rules.
   f. Its rules constitute a temporary suspension of some of the ordinary activities of life and rules of behavior by substituting for them these special time and space delimited ones.
3. Games, along with "make-believe" activities which can be compared with simulated experiences, are a universal activity of children. One has only to observe the interest and dedication of the children in these activities to draw parallel between these activities and the involvement of students in learning games. This involvement leads to active inquiry and discussion sessions after the simulation game experience, increased student motivation to learn more, and explore more deeply the subject and to discover an interest or at least an increased interest in an area previously considered dull.
4. Simulation can provide experiences along a variety of dimensions: (1) affective-cognitive; (2) process oriented-content oriented; and (3) self/system-evaluation-instructor evaluation.
5. Simulation-gaming experiences should be incorporated into a larger guidance unit, as in a school or into the format of a college level course. In this way they can provide inquiry training exercises as well as the opportunity to explore and try out creative and innovative designs in a responsive environment.
6. Simulation allows a counselor trainee to practice new behaviors and receive feedback in a timeless environment. Thus it is an ideal situation for rehearsing practices and techniques.
7. Because of the timelessness of the simulated environment the participant has the opportunity and the freedom to explore various alternatives, as well as adequate time in which to deal with the situation presented.
8. Simulation experiences can call attention to errors and misconceptions that could be disastrous in a real life situation.
9. Simulation allows the individual to actively participate in activities which parallel real life situations and to gain experience and skills in decision-making and problem-solving techniques.
10. Simulation games can be modified to suit the curriculum objectives and/or the characteristics and needs of the students who will play them.

ACTION POSSIBILITIES

1. Instruction-simulation can be used in a pre-practicum or practicum situation. In the pre-practicum situation it can help to relieve some of the anxiety counselor trainees feel at the onset of practicum. In the practicum situation it can provide opportunities for (1) trying out new behaviors, and (2) working with and improving specified behaviors and techniques. This method can also be used as an inservice training technique. It would enable counselors to update and maintain their skills and could be used in conjunction with peers or consultants.
2. The use, understanding and construction gaming techniques can be covered in a counselor education program. Trainees who are made aware of these techniques and instruments and who have the opportunity to use and work with them would be more willing to incorporate them into the programs they develop.
3. Gaming has received a good deal of usage in teacher education (Cruickshank, 1967; Kersh, 1965). The format is to provide experiences in problem solving for teacher preparation programs and in-service training. Gaming can be used by counselors in the same manner. (Dunlop, 1968)
4. Simulation gaming can be utilized to initiate information seeking in regard to educational and career planning. Courses or plan units can be built around such items as the Life Career Game Career Kits and the Parent-Child Game (Academic Games Associates)
5. Individual counselors can design simulations on specific topics dealing with particular problems. This can be done in conjunction with colleagues or with students as suggested by Cherryholmes (1966). This type of activity will allow the student to become

deeply involved in an area and provide him the opportunity to explore and work with new and creative ideas.

IMPLEMENTATION

Simulation-gaming is not a panacea. The following questions need to be considered when designing or using a simulation game or a simulation.

1. What instructional objectives is the experience designed to meet? Is it to teach a specific concept? Is it to help in the decision-making process?
2. Is the simulation valid as a teaching medium? Will participants retain the information learned? Will participants learn principles and facts?
3. What type of training is required by those who will supervise the simulation? What form should preparation or training sessions take?
4. Does the participant learn operations or facts which are transferable, i.e., used by and applied by others, to a corresponding real life situation? Will the participant operate under a disadvantage as a result of his experience when faced with the real life world?
5. How will the score or outcome of a simulation be evaluated? In what way will the experience fit into the whole, i.e., course structure? Will it be motivational or evaluated as one would a testing experience?
6. What is the reality factor? How much of the real life situation (factors) need to be depicted in order to present a realistic representation of the real world?
7. What type of feedback should be given to participants? Should it be intermittent or given only at the conclusion of the experience? What form would the presentation take?
8. What kind of penalties should be imposed for lack of skill, poor judgment or self-defeating strategies?

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